

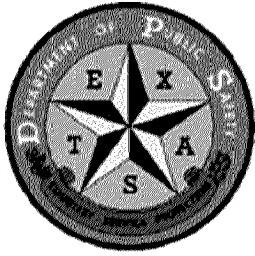
From: Bodisch, Robert
To: Rodriguez, Tony
Sent: 9/18/2013 7:55:39 AM
Subject: FW: Issuing free voter IDs on Saturdays is a good first step for Texas

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From: Bodisch, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2013 10:08 AM
To: Bodisch, Robert; cshorter@sos.state.tx.us; daniel.hodge@oag.state.tx.us; Peters, Joe
Subject: Issuing free voter IDs on Saturdays is a good first step for Texas

Fort Worth Star-Telegram
SEP 17 2013

Issuing free voter IDs on Saturdays is a good first step for Texas

The Department of Public Safety announced Friday that 48 driver's license offices, including five in Tarrant County, will be open from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturdays through Nov. 2 for people who need a state-issued voter ID to participate in the Nov. 5 elections.

See how easy that was?

Now let's straighten out some more of the kinks in the voter ID law approved by the Legislature in 2011 and made effective after a Supreme Court ruling in June.

A few more steps like this one and Texas would have a significantly easier time defending itself against the federal lawsuit filed in Corpus Christi by U.S. Rep. Marc Veasey, D-Fort Worth, and joined by Attorney General Eric Holder.

To review: A three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia examined the

Texas voter ID law last year. The Supreme Court, in a 2008 case from Indiana, put its stamp of approval on requiring in-person voters to show some form of ID before they can cast a ballot.

But the D.C. district court said Texas had gone too far. DPS provides the needed identification certificates without charge, but the cost of necessary background documents (a \$22 copy of a birth certificate, for example) could be burdensome for some people.

Until Saturday, DPS offices were not open nights or weekends, and almost a third of the counties in Texas have no DPS office.

A Supreme Court ruling in an unrelated case made the D.C. court's ruling ineffective, but the objections to the Texas law survived to be challenged again.

It's not necessary to go through this fight. As the decision to open DPS offices on Saturdays shows, Texas can overcome the objections and still have a strong voter ID law.

The state could:

- Waive fees for indigent people who need documents to get a voter ID.
- Reimburse poor Texans who must travel long distances to a DPS office.
- Expand the range of acceptable identification at the polls to include student or Medicare ID cards.
- Allow indigent people to cast provisional ballots without photo ID.

It's not hard. it's a whole lot easier, faster and cheaper than fighting the federal case back to the Supreme Court.

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